

Why did he throw it all away?

LAST-ROUND NERVES have been blamed for many a loss in that vital final game of a tournament that meant the difference between success and failure. But when the victim of a blunder is an International Grandmaster with a reputation for steadiness and years of experience behind him, other reasons must be considered.

Such was the case with the English Grandmaster Raymond Keene in round 10 of the New York Invitation tournament. In such a closely bunched field around the 50 per cent mark, an extra point meant the difference between coming third equal — most respectable — or around seventh.

Against Soviet emigre Leonid Shamkovich, now living in the USA, Keene opened using his favourite Modern defence and obtained a promising game. Shamkovich, almost forced to sacrifice a piece for unclear counter-chances, appeared to be in a critical situation when Keene brought his rook into play on move 26. But a calm king move gave Keene one last chance to go astray — which he did and lost the game.

Was it last-round nerves? Or was it simply an unlucky tactical miscalculation? A close examination of the game provides the answer.

MODERN DEFENCE	
L. SHAMKOVICH	R. KEENE
1. e4	g6
2. d4	Bg7
3. Nf3	d6
4. Bc4	Nf6
5. Qe2	0-0
6. e5	Ne8
7. 0-0	Bg4
8. Rd1	Nc6
9. Bd5	

An improvement on 9.Bf4 Qc8 and Black is slightly better as in Cuartas-Keene, England 1980.

9. . . .	Qd7
10. Nc3	e6
11. Bb3 ?!	

The critical continuation is probably 11.Bxc6 Qxc6 12.Bg5!? when Black could try 12. . . . Kh8!? with the idea of 13.Be7 Bxf3 (but not 13. . . . Rg8 ?? 14.Ng5! winning for White). From here on Keene, author of several works on the Modern defence, conducts the opening and early middlegame instructively.

11. . . .	d5
12. h3	Bxf3
13. Qxf3	f6
14. Qe2	fxe5
15. dxe5	Kh8

Neither 15. . . . Nxe5 nor 15. . . . Bxe5 is possible immediately due to 16.Nxd5 eXd5 17.Rxd5.

16. f4	g5!
17. Rf1	Nd4
18. Qh5	c5
19. Be3	

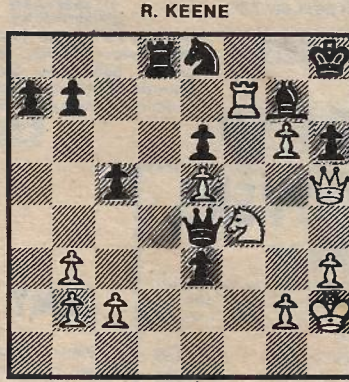
Shamkovich sees his best practical

chance lies in this piece sacrifice. After the game the players wondered about 19.Ba4 (with the interesting idea 19. . . . b5 20.Nxb5 Nxb5 21.c4! dxc4 22.Bc2) but the simple 19. . . . Qe7 is also good for Black.

19. . . .	Nxb3
20. axb3	d4
21. fxg5	Rxf1 ch
22. Rxf1	dxe3
23. g6	h6
24. Rf7	Qd4
25. Ne2	Qe4
26. Nf4	Rd8!

Activating this rook should have proved decisive. With both players running into mild time-pressure Shamkovich, a talented tactician, finds the best chance.

27. Kh2 !



And at this critical phase of the game the "intuitive" move of 27. . . . e2!, suggested by most of the spectators, would

have won. Instead play ended . . .

27. . . .	Kg8??
28. Qh4!	Rc8
29. Qe7!	Qxf4 ch

Black's original idea had been to play 29. . . . Qxe5 here, but too late he saw 30.Rf8 ch! Bxf8 31.Qh7 mate.

30. Rxf4	Nc7
31. Rf7	Resigns

The question is, why did Black reject the most obvious continuation on his 27th move? If we look further we see it may not be so easy — White can allow Black to promote his pawn with 28.Qh4 e1=Q? 29.Qxd8! and even with two queens Black succumbs to the mating threats.

But after the game we discovered two winning resources for Black after 27. . . . e2 28.Qh4; Zaltsman's meteoric 28. . . . Rd7! (deflecting White's rook so after 29.Rxd7 e1=Q he cannot penetrate to e7 with his queen because of the loose knight on f4) or my comparatively sedate queen sacrifice of 28. . . . Rd4 29.Qe7 Qxf4 ch! 30.Rxf4 Rxf4 31.Qxe8 ch Rf8 and Black makes a new queen next move.

Having missed these wins, but having seen the 28.Qh4 threat, Keene played a move to defend against the mating threat — only it didn't. An unfortunate case of seeing too little — or too much.

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